

Maine Department of Conservation  
Bureau of Parks and Lands  
Scoping/Listening Session – Flagstaff Region Management Plan  
University of Maine-Farmington, March 29, 2005, 6-8:30 p.m.

Welcome and Introductions - Dave Soucy, Director, Bureau of Parks and Lands

The Bureau is about to revise/develop a management plan for the Flagstaff area; we are here to listen to you tell us how these lands should be managed. The Bureau is guided by statute and the Integrated Resource Policy (IRP) to manage these lands for multiple uses. The IRP will help us make the most effective argument for how the land should be allocated. Hearing your concerns will also help.

Properties in the Flagstaff Plan Region – Pete Smith, Manager, Western Region Lands

Description of the properties to be included in the regional plan, including the Bigelow Preserve, Dead River-Spring Lake Unit, Mount Abraham (Abram), Chain of Ponds, Flagstaff Twp. (Myers Lodge, Flagstaff Lake frontage acquired from Plum Creek), King and Bartlett Twp., several lots in Highland Plantation, several lots in Coplin Plantation, Wyman-Carrabassett Valley lot, Redington Twp., and Freeman Twp. The Bureau also has a conservation easement on Pierce Pond for which we have monitoring responsibilities.

Planning Process - John Titus, Flagstaff Plan Coordinator

The Bureau has a defined process for developing management plans, which includes conducting resource inventories (mostly done), determining important management issues to be addressed in the plan, and getting feedback from stakeholders and the general public. A public advisory committee will be selected to review drafts of the plan as they are developed; other members of the public may receive these drafts and comment as well.

Public Comments – Facilitated by Dave Soucy

- Need to consult with the early process that brought the Preserve into existence.
- 85 % of respondents to a recent survey (total of 103) are OK with current management.
- Preserve was not created for economic development.
- 74% of respondents (total of 103) would like to see less snowmobiling in the Preserve – snowmobiling should be revisited and discussed.
- If you look at an aerial view of the Bigelow Preserve, you can see that it is an island within a vast industrial landbase.
- ATV'ing contributes 200 million dollars in year to the Maine economy. It is growing from a nuisance to a viable activity. There is now need for an inter-connected trail system.
- The Appalachian Trail is truly “wild” on the state-owned lands. Need to make sure there is sufficient buffering from timber harvesting and motorized trail activities. Will be focused on the quality of experience for AT users.
- The Integrated Resource Policy makes no mention of private landowners. People often confuse public and private land, with land uses often spilling over from one to the other.
- Fire Control needs to be addressed in the plan
- The Preserve should be embraced as a “wilderness” area. There are encroachments that have been neglected.
- Wilderness is more of an intrinsic rather than economic value. Only 1/10 of the public ownership is in wilderness.
- Opportunities for motorized trail use are abundant in Maine; the Preserve is not the place for it.
- There is need for an ATV trail on the Preserve to connect with the Carrabassett Valley system. Many riders are not as physically able as those who hike in the Preserve, so we need this opportunity.

- Need to pay attention to the people who live in the area. Many advocate for multiple uses that don't exploit the resources. We want snowmobile, ATV (not in the Preserve), mountain bike, snowshoe, and groomed cross-country ski trails, as well as hunting and fishing areas. We want the lodge continued, as well as the Round Barn campsite, and the two-wheel vehicle access as it is today.
- Want to see discontinued the negative activities at Big eddy and Myers Lodge
- The hut and trail proposal creates opportunity unmatched anywhere in Northern New England; can provide employment to Native Americans.
- The Preserve is very often underutilized. There is plenty of room to accommodate different users; "public" means inclusive, not exclusive.
- Weekend use in the Preserve is primarily out of town; weekday use is mostly local people. Often times, there aren't that many people in the Preserve.
- Stay with the 1989 plan, avoid the confusion of looking at the Preserve with other lots.
- Concerned about keeping the Preserve intact.
- Recommend concentrating use and access in the southern portion of the Preserve, and having the northern half remote and without development; replace Round Barn with a water access only site.
- Need to include an inventory of Preserve facilities in 1976, today, and in the future.
- Identify all in-holdings and try to acquire them.
- A standing committee should be appointed for the Preserve.
- Old growth and visual resource inventories are lacking in the 1989 plan.
- All trail buffers should be increased from 100' to 250-500' based on terrain.
- The 1989 plan indicates that Flagstaff Twp. is not in the Preserve – this should be revisited.
- The 1989 definition of roads does not match the language in the law (Bigelow Act).
- Would like to see a decreased number of roads in the Preserve.
- There are not a lot of areas for a quality overnight experience.
- Mechanized logging has the biggest impact on the Preserve; it needs to be done with extreme caution.
- Favor looking at the broader scope envisioned in the Plan; gives us a chance to look at natural systems and the economy, which will be critical to the process.
- Economic development is OK and needed in this area, provided it is done with integrity and care.
- Local people have a symbiotic relationship with the Preserve, if you change it, it will change the local people.

Wrap-up - Dave Soucy